



Buzzwords ...



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..... the newsletter for National Beekeepers' Association members

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"SO, YOU'RE A KILLER BEE..."



FROM THE PRESIDENT

I had the privilege to act as leader of the team that met with the Agricultural Caucus Committee in John Falloon's office on October 1. At issue were the Australian honey import protocols, and especially the risk analysis developed by the MAF Regulatory Authority (see *Buzzwords* 46).

As you know, the Minister had announced that the protocols would be approved sometime in October, unless "compelling technical arguments are present against their adoption." At our meeting, the Acting Chief Veterinary Officer, Chris Boland, announced that they had "received some technical information which appears contradictory to the evidence on which the proposed conditions for honey from Australia were based". As a result, he said, the protocols were to be deferred until they could straighten out "these apparent contradictions".

I believe our industry can claim some credit for having stalled these protocols for the time being, although I am in

no doubt that unless we can show that there are important questions which require scientific study, the government will once again try to get the protocols through.

On behalf of the executive, I have approached Dr. Mark Goodwin and asked him to help provide us with a scientific perspective regarding honey from Australia and the associated risk. I am pleased to announce that Mark has accepted my invitation, and he will be providing the national executive with much-needed technical information in the months to come.

I would also like to acknowledge the wonderful support your executive has had on this issue from so many branches and individual members. Our industry can certainly pull together very well when it comes to a serious matter. The submissions many of you wrote to the draft protocols surely brought into question many of the assumptions which officials made in the risk analysis. And your intense lobbying of Members of Parliament certainly had an effect, as

evidenced by the strong arguments put forward by several members of the Caucus Committee.

Still, this is no time to let our guard down. We need to continue to write letters and make submissions and let those in power know that they are subjecting our industry to an unjustified risk of exotic disease, without taking any responsibility for that risk. The risk has been avoided in the meantime, but we are by no means out of the woods yet.

* * * * *

In most areas of the country this has been a very difficult spring. I know everyone has to work hard looking after their bees in a season like this. I hope you all get just reward for the effort you are making.

Dudley Ward, president

BOOK MYSTERY SOLVED

Following our article in *Buzzwords* 45 regarding the release of a revised edition of *Practical Beekeeping in New Zealand*, a number of readers have been asking where they can buy a copy. No one, it seems, has seen the new title in any of the book shops.

To clear up this mystery, we called Richard Langdale, Operations Manager, GP Publications, the book's publisher. It was his office that had originally sent us the promotional material on the book which listed the publication month as this September.

According to Mr. Langdale, the large number of books being released this spring by GP has meant a production backlog has developed. At least six of their new titles (including *Practical Beekeeping in New Zealand*) have therefore had to have their release dates rescheduled. Richard asks us to apologise on his behalf to beekeepers throughout the country, and promises that the new edition of the book will be out in early 1993 (probably January). He said the first edition was remarkably popular for a special interest title, and from the number of pre-orders which have already been made by some of the nation's leading book retailers, it looks like this edition will also enjoy brisk sales.

DISEASE CONTROL COMMITTEE FORMED

Now that this year's disease control programme is in full swing, your national executive is taking steps to ensure that the industry has a well-considered plan for disease control services in the future (see *Buzzwords* 44). A discussion paper was circulated to all levy papers in May to help foster discussion about such services. The paper didn't generate many responses from individuals, but a number of branches made submissions, and the paper has proven to be a spring-board for discussion about what the goals of such a programme should be.

To help establish the future direction of American foulbrood control in New Zealand, your executive has recently set up a committee, to be chaired by Ian Berry, a former NBA president and well-respected industry leader. Other

nominated members include Bruce Stevenson, Terry Gavin, Bryan Clements, Alan McCaw, Warren Hantz, and Noel Tresize. The committee is expected to report to the executive early next year, describing the nature, quantity and objectives of what the industry wants in the way of disease control programmes. Their recommendations will form, in effect, the contract that any potential provider of services will "bid for" in the years to come.

FOOD INDUSTRY AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations are in order to Airborne Honey and Arataki Honey (Hawkes Bay Division) for taking out two awards at the recent Printpac UEB Food Awards (see *Buzzwords* 42). The awards were announced in Auckland on October 14. The panel of judges was headed by Alison Holst, New Zealand's premier food writer and presenter.

Airborne won the "High Class Specialty Products" award for their Red and Green gift packs - two separate packs each with 3 pots of different flavoured honey. The judges commented that "this small company is making top quality New Zealand honeys in innovative flavours, many based on our native plants, as a means of differentiating New Zealand honey. They are marketing their products as high value items for the tourist market in very attractive gift packs which can be easily carried or mailed."

Arataki Honey won one of the four "Highly Commended" awards for their "Squeeze Me Honey" container, a creative product innovation in the food processing industry. According to the judges, "runny honey has hitherto been a difficult product to dispense. The excellent consumer friendly packaging for this product will give total appeal for everyone. This method of dispensing will make the honey easier to use as a spread and in cooking, and will encourage its use in other ways such as dessert and cereal toppings and as a sweetener for drinks."

Sue Jenkins, Marketing Committee

AIRBORNE HITS U.S.

Airborne Honey, Leeston, is also making news in another country, this time the U.S. Airborne was named a finalist in the "Outstanding Jam, Preserve, Spread or Topping" category of the 20th annual National Association for Specialty Food Trade (NASFT) Products Award Competition held June 25-26 in New York City. A record 782 entries were submitted, with 83 finalists chosen in 18 categories to continue into the final round.

The final judging took place at the Summer Fancy Food Show on June 26-29 in Washington DC, where nearly 1000 exhibitors displayed about 21,000 specialty foods.

Peter Bray, Airborne's director, said the U.S. market had outstanding potential. Its 250 million people comprised a huge market, even though consumption per head was not high. The U.S. consumed about 150,000 tonnes of honey a year, and produced between 90,000 and 100,000 tonnes itself.

In the U.S. the use of honey varied enormously from region to region with some consumers treating it as a spread, and



others as a syrup or topping. In some areas there was no creamed honey sold at all. Packaging, too, varied from narrow-necked containers for pouring through to wider necked jars for spreads. Honey also tends to be a seasonal product, with people not buying until after the first frost.

Airborne is sending its first container of honey products to its U.S. distributor this (northern) autumn. The exports are being packaged as they would be for the N.Z. market and were aimed at the small, gourmet market in the U.S. This market had both domestic U.S. and European competitors, but according to Peter Bray, Airborne was finding that its products were very well priced in comparison with European suppliers.

Export News, October 8, 1992

HONEY POTS WANTED (QUICK!)

An urgent request has come from Mary Ann Lindsay, the Southwestern District branch "live wire", for honey pots. The pots will make up part of the beekeeping display at this year's nation-wide Scout Jamboree, to be held during December and January in Upper Hutt.

Mary Ann published a request for pots in the last issue of *The New Zealand Beekeeper*, but so far she has only had 5 replies. She's going to need a lot more than that to set up an "eye-catching" display, so come on everyone, let's bury Mary Ann in pots (it will serve her right for taking all those "candid snapshots" at conference)! You can send 500 gm pots (full or empty) to:

Mary Ann Lindsay
26 Cunliffe St
Johnsonville
Wellington

And in case you're wondering what she's going to do with all that honey afterwards, she assures us that any full pots will be donated to the local Wellington food banks.

DEFERRED HIVE LEVIES

With the increase in the Hive Levy for 1993, beekeepers will be wanting to plan and budget for the amount to be paid this coming year. Your NBA executive is considering various options to assist.

The collection of the Hive Levy is controlled by the Hive Levy Act, 1978, and its amendments. The Act requires that all beekeepers with 50 or more hives make a declaration to the NBA of hives owned by February 20, and pay a levy based on that declaration by March 31.

Under the Act, any levy payer can apply for a deferred payment date, but only if a written application is made prior to March 31. (The Act does not give the executive the authority to consider applications for deferred payment made after that date). Such an application should indicate why the deferral is required, the amount that is due, and the date when payment will be made. By law, it is then up to the NBA executive to make a decision on each application. The executive notifies each applicant of their decision as soon as they consider the case.

To assist beekeepers with substantial hive levy amounts to pay, your executive is making provision to accept installment payments for the 1993 levy from beekeepers owning more than 500 hives. To comply with the Act, however, beekeepers wishing to take advantage of this installment payment arrangement **MUST ENSURE THAT A WRITTEN APPLICATION IS MADE BEFORE MARCH 31, 1993.** The application must be accompanied by the completed Hive Levy Declaration form.

Your executive will need to know the total amount of levy that is due and the proposed schedule of payments. The schedule should include a list of specific payment dates and the amounts that will be paid on each date. No schedule should be proposed that involves more than four payments, and all payments must be completed by November 30, 1993.

If a deferred payment scheme is accepted (the final decision is up to the NBA executive), no invoices will be issued for each payment as it comes due. It will be the beekeeper's responsibility to keep track of the payments, based on the agreed payment schedule. No reminders or overdue notices will be sent to the beekeeper, and no individual receipts will be made for each payment. The cashed cheque will serve as proof of payment. Payments must be made by the agreed due date. Otherwise, by law the beekeeper becomes liable for the 10% penalty prescribed by the Hive Levy Act.

An application form which can be used to request payment by installment is available from the NBA head office, PO Box 4048, Wellington. Remember that the application should not be made until after the 1993 Hive Levy Declaration form is received in early January.

If you have any comments regarding this deferred payment proposal, please feel free to direct them to any executive member or send them c/- the Executive Secretary, NBA head office.

NBA Executive

HONEY TEST COSTS

Over the past several years, *Buzzwords* has been keeping you up-to-date with the work Dr. Peter Molan and his staff at the University of Waikato have been carrying out on honey. Peter's lab has been responsible for important breakthroughs in a number of areas, including honey fingerprinting, chemical analysis, and of course, antibacterial activity. We mentioned in *Buzzwords* 44 that Peter and his staff have been doing much of this work on a shoe-string, and the manuka work in particular is a side-line interest to their real jobs at the university.

Our industry has been quite fortunate to have a man of Peter's calibre interested in honey, and he and his lab technician, Kerry Allan, have tested a lot of honey from members over the past few years. The "free ride" couldn't last forever, however, and their lab has finally had to announce that from now on they will have to charge for antibacterial activity testing of honey.



HONEY INDUSTRY TRUST FUND

Applications for funding close on 15 August and 15 February. Forms available from the NBA, PO Box 4048, Wellington.

The cost per sample for a qualitative screening test will be \$20, with testing being done only when there are sufficient samples to do a batch (at least 15). If testing is required urgently and there are less than the minimum number of samples on hand to be tested, the charge will be \$30 per sample.

If a certificate of analysis is required, the lab will have to do a quantitative assay. In this case, charges range between \$35-55 per sample, depending on the number of samples.

Peter and Kerry would also like us to pass on their thanks to the many beekeepers who have sent in samples of manuka and other honeys for their antibacterial activity work. They no longer require samples of manuka honey for this season, but would still like samples of vipers bugloss, the only other honey so far which has shown the special "x factor" of non-peroxide antibacterial activity (see *Buzzwords* 44). Needless to say, there will be no charge to beekeepers for the testing of any vipers bugloss samples used in their research this year.

NEW AAO NAMED

MAF Quality Management is pleased to announce the appointment of David McMillan as Apicultural Advisory Officer, effective October 19. David will be based at Invermay Agricultural Centre, near Dunedin, and will be responsible for the Otago-Southland Apiary Registration District.

David tells us he is pleased to be able to move back to the "Deep South" after a period working in Wellington with the Asthma Research Group. David attended Otago University in Dunedin, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in 1990. He is also no stranger to honey bees. During summer breaks at varsity David was employed as a technician by MAF Technology at Invermay, working almost entirely on beekeeping research. During his second summer with MAF, David was given sole responsibility for the day-to-day running of one of the beekeeping management projects.

David will undergo a period of initial training with MAF apicultural staff in various parts of the country, and during that period Matthew Sole, Field Officer, Alexandra, will handle most apicultural services in the area. Once David has settled in, Matthew will continue to make a valuable contribution to MAF's apiculture group in the south, and will also keep working with the fruit industry in Central Otago and with Fruit Fly EDPR.

Stephen Ogden, South Island Apicultural Services Manager

SUSPECT SAMPLES SOUGHT

Beekeepers throughout the country are busy this month inspecting their hives for American foulbrood and reporting their findings in their Annual Statement of Inspection. The inspection is a statutory obligation under the Apiaries Act. Most beekeepers treat this obligation quite seriously, and

the high rate of compliance allows MAF to run an efficient and effective American foulbrood programme on behalf of the NBA.

Many beekeepers may not realise, however, that section 18 of the Act also requires them to inspect their hives for another brood disease - European foulbrood. But the problem, of course, is what does EFB look like, and how can a positive diagnosis be made?

The answer isn't straightforward, since to even the experienced eye the brood symptoms look identical to those of halfmoon syndrome. Only a microscopic examination and bacterial culture can confirm the presence of the disease-causing organism (*Melissococcus pluton*). Beekeepers therefore need to be extremely vigilant to prevent this serious bee disease from becoming established in our country.

MAF personnel will be sampling 500 apiaries in "high risk" areas of the country (cities, tourist areas, refuse disposal sites, ports) for the presence of EFB and other exotic honey bee pests and diseases. Queen exporters are also being asked to provide samples. All samples are processed by Dr. Mark Goodwin and his team at Ruakura, and the results are used to justify our statements regarding New Zealand's bee disease-free status on live bee and bee product export certificates.

This surveillance is important, but beekeepers throughout New Zealand also need to do their part. During hive inspections, if you see any suspicious brood (freshly dead larvae twisted in the cell, straw-yellow coloration, veining in the larvae, halfmoon-like scale), by all means take a sample. Remove the cell contents with a matchstick, put both in a plastic bag, mark the hive, and send the sample, along with apiary identification details (landowner, road name, district) to your local AAO. The sample will be processed at Ruakura (MAF pays), with the results communicated back to you as soon as possible.

Despite our strict border controls, the possibility still exists that an exotic bee disease will somehow find its way into New Zealand. However, if we have observant, committed beekeepers looking for abnormalities in their hives, we have a good chance of catching such bee-borne intruders before they have a chance to spread out of control.

MAF Quality Management

BUZZWORDS IS ...

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